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Portland Business Journal - April 16, 2010
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Friday, April 16, 2010

Feds give TriMet \$2.4M for streetcar

Portland Business Journal

TriMet has been awarded \$2.4 million from the Federal Transit Administration to research a U.S.-produced streetcar propulsion system.

The work will be led by Clackamas-based **Oregon Iron Works Inc.**, whose subsidiary, United Streetcar LLC, is the only U.S.-based manufacturer of streetcars.

In a news release Friday, the Federal Transit Administration said the funds represent its 80 percent share of a \$3 million project in which \$600,000 will come from a local match.

The goal of the project is to fill a major hole in the U.S. streetcar supply chain. Propulsion systems account for about 20 percent of a streetcar's cost, but the only manufacturers are based outside the U.S.

United Streetcar, which last year unveiled the first U.S.-built streetcar in 58 years, uses a propulsion system made by Czechoslovakia-based Skoda Electric S.A.

Chandra Brown, United Streetcar's president, said the federal funds will be used to test a propulsion system developed by Milwaukee, Wisc.-based Rockwell Automation.

Once installed, 90 percent of the streetcar's components will be made domestically, up from 70 percent today, Brown said.

The federal project will also support initial work on a streetcar that can travel short distances without overhead wires, allowing the potential for service in areas where wires are deemed a hazard.

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